

ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY. 61

probably the strongest single factor operating to draw the eight villages together. The lands were thus influential in pre-Columbian times when all real property was held in common, usually not by the *pueblo* but by the subdivision of the *pueblo*, the *calpolli*.^{*} Since the Reforma (1857) communal holdings have been generally reduced to individual tenure. This was probably early accomplished in Tepoztlán; private agricultural tracts are there the subject of entirely individual ownership and sale. Nevertheless the private lands are encircled by public lands in which all inhabitants of the eight villages share and which, with the *milpas*, constitute the local "fatherland."

There are thus both private and public lands in Tepoztlán. The private lands include:

1. *House sites (sitios) with their attendant agricultural plots (milpas).*—Characteristically each *sitio* has an appendant *milpa*, which may be located as much as a mile away from the *sitio*; but the two are usually taxed, and inherited together. These tracts are not infrequently sold, but most of them have been in the same family for many generations. Most of the produce supporting the community is raised on the *milpas*. There should also be mentioned the *corrales*, yards at the back of dwellings sometimes planted with corn or beans.

2. *Milpas de labor.*—These are agricultural lands reduced to private possession and tillage out of the

^{*} The *calpolli* was perhaps originally a kinship unit; its limited survival in Tepoztlán will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

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178 learned his trade in Mexico City. Here he has entered
 463 into the freer economic competition that characterizes
 the city, and his abilities have enabled him to survive
 by means of a trade or profession which he is fitted to
 carry on. The herb-doctor, the *chirimitero*, the mask-
 maker, and the others of this group have, it would
 seem, more often inherited their professions, come
 into them almost inevitably. This is clear for the
chirimiteros, *huehuechihque*, and maskmakers; infor-
 mation is lacking as to the herb-doctors and midwives.
 The techniques employed by the specialists of the
 first class are those of modern European civilization.
 Those of the second class are, for the most part, an-
 cient heritages of the Indian culture. The art of the
 [177] fireworks-maker is a European technique, it is true,
 but it is one early acquired and incorporated into the
 folk culture. Information from other Mexican vil-
 lages¹ suggests that, like other specialties in the second
 group, it tends to become a mystery, a guarded art
 transmitted reluctantly to only certain individuals.

In almost every case it is lamented, by *los tontos*,
 that the specialists of the second group are becoming
 fewer. There used to be many *chirimiteros*; now there
 are but three. Young men want to learn to play the
 violin rather than the *chirimía*. The few remaining
huehuechihque are overworked. The greater need for

[424] ¹ "In such wisdom lies precisely the success of the trade and because of its
 [428] precious formulas, reserved in most rigorous secrecy, pass from father to son as
 an inestimable legacy, and only on rare occasions to the predilect worker, gener-
 ally the future son-in-law, as a recompense for great fidelity" (M. O. de Mendiza-
 bal, "Powder That Kills and Powder That Amuses," *Mexican Folkways*, III
 [1927], 15).

land tenure: 6

THREE TYPES of land tenure are found in Tepoztlán: communal land holdings, *ejido* holdings, and private holdings. Communal lands comprise approximately eighty per cent of the land of the municipio and include four of the five land types, *terrazal*, *monte*, *cerros*, and *terrenos cerriles*. These lands have belonged traditionally to the municipio and have been under its control. Any member of the municipio enjoys the right to use these lands, and they are not divided into plots. 423 631

Ejido lands constitute somewhat less than five per cent of the land within the municipio and consist primarily of arable land for plow agriculture. *Ejido* lands are communally owned by the municipio but are under the control of locally elected *ejido* authorities, rather than the regular municipal authorities. *Ejido* holdings differ from other communal holdings in that they are divided into small plots and assigned to individuals in accord with the rules of eligibility established by the National *Ejido* Program. *Ejido* and private holdings are practically identical, except that the former cannot be sold. However, *ejido* plots may remain in the same family for many years and may be passed down from father to sons if the need for the land can be satisfactorily proved. Private holdings consist mostly of the land used for plow agriculture and constitute about sixteen per cent of all the land in the municipio. Private holdings are held in fee simple, and ownership must be proved by legal title. [624] 432 428 423

It is important to remember that in Tepoztlán all three types of landholdings are worked individually rather than collectively. The only exception relates to the working of church lands. Here we find a curious combination of what is technically private ownership with a collective form of labor. Each of the seven barrios "owns" a plot of land which is worked collectively by the members of the barrio for the support of the barrio chapel. The land, however, is registered in the name of a trusted barrio member because of the law against the church ownership of land. This type of collective working of land is an old pattern. Before the Revolution of 1857 each of the twenty saints in the large central church of the village had its plot of land which its particular devotees worked collectively. The similarity between this system and that of the pre-Conquest days is noteworthy, and it is possible that 423 476 794

423 of land, we find that 64 per cent of the families own no private land. The distribu-
 [183] tion of privately owned land is shown in Table 20.

TABLE 20. Distribution of Privately Owned Land by Family Units and House Sites, 1944.

Barrio	House Sites	Family Units	Families Owning Land		Families With Two Members Owning Land	Families With Three Members Owning Land	Families Not Owning Land	Families Not Owning Land Who Live With Landowners
			No.	Per Cent				
San Miguel	163	214	83	38.3	12	1	131	21
La Santísima	139	195	62	33.5	6	..	123	17
Santo Domingo	174	223	61	27.4	..	..	162	21
Santa Cruz (large)	67	82	44	53.6	5	..	38	10
Los Reyes	37	49	30	61.2	1	..	19	3
San Sebastián	34	42	11	26.2	1	..	31	3
Santa Cruz (small)	29	36	10	26.1	..	..	26	3
San Pedro	19	22	10	41.4	..	..	12	3
Tepoztlán	662	853	311	36.4	25	1	542	81

On the whole, the smaller barrios have a larger proportion of landowners. The outstanding exception is San Sebastián, by far the poorest barrio in the village. It should be noted that Los Reyes, one of the smaller barrios, has an extremely high percentage of landowners and is known as one of the richer barrios. On the other hand, Santa Cruz (large), which shows a high percentage of landowners, is known as one of the poorer barrios. Similarly, the large barrios which here show a low percentage of landowners have some of the wealthiest families in the village. In other words, the distribution of land-ownership is not in itself an accurate index of barrio wealth. Our data, however, do show that the largest number of landless families are in the center barrios.

423 The small number of families in which two or more members own land points
 [128] to the lack of concentration of land-ownership along family lines, and also reflects the inheritance pattern of not dividing the property until the father's death. The fact that 81 families without land live on the same house site with families who own land tends to modify to some degree the picture of landlessness, for most of these 81 families are married sons living with their fathers and working for them.

SIZE OF PRIVATE HOLDINGS

The striking thing about landholdings is their extremely small size. This can be seen from Table 21,* which shows that 90.6 per cent of all private holdings are less

* Private holdings here refer to what Tepoztecos call *propiedad rústica* which is outside of the village, as over against *propiedad urbana* which is located within the village. The latter refers to house sites, some of which have small areas devoted to corn.

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114 between *sitios urbanos* (urban house sites) and *predios rústicos* (rural parcels), and
 423 they are listed separately in the property register. Furthermore, a Tepotecan who
 351 owns only an urban house site is not considered a landowner. This, despite the fact
 243 that some *sitios* have sufficient land to plant a patch of corn. Traditionally, the house
 428 site milpas are used principally for fresh corn. In 1944, however, less than 20 per
 cent of all house sites were planted in corn, a lower figure no doubt than that pre-
 vailing in 1926; as the population is increasing, the house sites are getting smaller
 because they are usually divided up for purposes of inheritance.

Second, Redfield's statement concerning the "appendant milpa" may refer to an
 old pattern which has not existed in the village since long before the Revolution
 of 1910, and I could find only a vague tradition of it remembered by a few older
 informants. After some investigation of this point I could not find a single example
 of a house site in the village with an "appendant milpa." The inheritance pattern
 that prevails today and that, as far as I was able to determine, has prevailed for
 a long time would rule out the situation of each house site having an "appendant
 428 milpa." It is common practice for the father to divide the inheritance, so that the
 house site goes to one child and the milpa to another.

It is possible that the conception of Tepoztecs as a landed peasantry
 was taken up from Redfield by Stuart Chase, who described Tepoztlán as a village
 with economic security. This is especially ironical in view of the fact that Tepoztlán
 669 was in the heart of Zapata country and was one of the first villages in Morelos to
 join the Revolution which, in this region, was essentially a bitter struggle for the
 land.

It has become traditional among historians, economists, and sociologists, in writ-
 ing on the history of the agrarian problem in Mexico, to distinguish between two
 fundamental types of social and economic organization: the so-called free village
 and the hacienda. The free village represents the older Indian form of organiza-
 tion, and the hacienda represents the Spanish form. Much of Mexican history has
 been described as a struggle between these two ways of life. One of the best state-
 ments on this situation is the following:

The stage is set. On the one hand is the institution of private property, already present
 in its incipient forms in pre-Conquest days, but now, with the importation of the *encomienda*, the *pronto*, and *caballería*, fortified, strengthened, and ready to develop in
 stature and power until soon it stands full grown as the classic type of landed estate—
 the hacienda. On the other hand is the landholding, communal village rooted deep in
 age-old custom and tradition and now given life and legal support in the reorganized
 native pueblo and in the scores of new villages soon to be founded on the Indian model.
 From this point of view the history of Mexico is, in its most fundamental aspects the
 drama of the struggle between feudalism and the free village, between the individual
 private estate and the collective, communal holding-in-fine, between the hacienda and the
ejido. For almost four hundred years it is the hacienda which wins. The victories of the
 villages are only temporary triumphs; slowly but surely the *ejido* is pushed back and
 back until by the turn of the twentieth century only in the mountain fastness and in a

Wealth Differences and Levels of Living / 177

It is apparent that there are no younger people in the upper group and very few in the middle group. The bulk of the younger people are at the low end of the scale. Conversely, the wealthiest are of an advanced age, mostly between fifty and sixty-nine. Forty-one per cent of the heads of families in Group I are over age fifty; 39 per cent are in Group II; and 74 per cent are in Group III. But while most of the wealthy are of advanced age, not all the old people are wealthy. The fact that 41 per cent of those in Group I are older people shows that vertical mobility is quite limited. The practice of not dividing up the property until the death of the parents often results in married sons, with as many as five children, being entirely landless and without a house of their own. [428] 556

There are no institutionalized barriers to vertical mobility in Tepoztlán. No single group has a monopoly of the means of production or the sources of wealth. No single group controls sufficient capital or labor to achieve wealth by its use or exploitation. The rate of capital accumulation is very slow because of the limited natural resources, the poor technology, and the low productivity, since the family is the basic productive unit. Nevertheless, there is a trend toward the concentration of wealth, especially in land. The upper economic group, though constituting only four per cent of all the families, owns approximately twenty-five per cent of the land, including some of the best land. Cattle ownership shows a similar trend.

It should be emphasized that there were no younger men as heads of families in the upper economic group. And the majority of the young men now in Groups I and II have little prospect of ever achieving the top position. In this sense there is little upward mobility possible in Tepoztlán. In keeping with this situation, we find that most Tepoztecos are convinced of the impossibility of becoming wealthy, and accordingly do not organize their lives around the goal of wealth. Rather, they are concerned with the day-to-day problems of subsistence. It is primarily among the families of Group II that we find higher aspirations, and it is from this group that there is some upward mobility.

Though the upper group is small, it is important to note that more people qualify for the upper group now than would have been the case before the Revolution, indicating that there has been increased upward movement since that time. Indeed, the shape of the social and economic pyramid has changed considerably. Before the Revolution the distribution of wealth was more concentrated in the hands of a few at the top of the pyramid, and the majority of Tepoztecos were day laborers for the local *caciques* and haciendas. One of the effects of the Revolution was to broaden the land base, enlarge the class of small landowners or *ejidatarios*, and at the same time increase the size of the upper group. It must also be noted that at least half of the families in the upper group worked their way up and are not members of the old *cacique* families. The wealthy are largely a new group who have taken advantage of the greater economic and political liberties since the Revolution. In fact, some of them were Zapatistas who had fought against the old regime. 556 669

Some of the newly rich got their start during the hectic days of the Revolution

Inter-Personal Relations Within the Family / 345

As we have seen earlier, there were only fourteen cases of married siblings living together on a single house site. Married sisters go off and soon identify their interests with those of their husbands. Since a married woman is under the authority of her husband, she is no longer free to visit her brothers at will. And while brothers are more free to visit with their married siblings, there are often strained relations between the in-laws. 593

The most frequent causes for friction between adult siblings is favoritism of the parents for a brother or sister. Favoritism may be shown by preference for the children of the favored son or daughter, by more frequent visiting, by economic aid, and by leaving a larger share of the inheritance. In most cases which we studied, grandparents showed favoritism to the children of their daughters rather than to those of sons. [578] [428] [603]

Quarrels between siblings over inheritance are frequent, and often lead to permanent rifts in the family. The difficulty of dividing up the property equally, the tendency to give more to sons than daughters, more to an older son, or again to a favorite, leads to quarrels. 578 593 [428]

The following case, which is typical of many, illustrates some of the points made about sibling relations.

Anastasio, age 54, has one elder brother and three sisters, all of whom are married and reside within short distances of one another. At present Anastasio is on good terms with them but there had been a rift in the family for several years, with Anastasio on one side and his brother and sisters on the other. Before the death of his mother, Anastasio visited his brother and sisters more often, he and his brother helped each other with harvesting and often drank together. When Anastasio had an important decision to make, he would seek the advice of his siblings. They also occasionally borrowed tools or corn from each other, and their wives would use the same sewing machine and went together to the market to sell. Anastasio was never as intimate with his two older sisters. Of them he said, "We behave respectfully toward them. We joke a little but not much." One of these sisters visits only on the day of the annual fiesta, on Anastasio's birthday, and when he is ill; the other sister visits even less because her husband is jealous and violent and beats her if she goes out unnecessarily. Anastasio feels closer to his younger sister because he supported her after the death of their father. Anastasio passes her house almost every day when he goes for water, and he always greets her. There is mutual visiting between the two families when there is illness, and they help each other in little ways. Anastasio hires this sister's sons to work for him when he needs peons. However, this sister rarely visits Anastasio because her husband is retiring and unsociable.

After the death of their widowed mother, these brothers and sisters quarreled over the inheritance. Some time before her death, the mother had sold Anastasio her house and *sitio* at a nominal price to keep him from moving to Yauhtepec. At her death he received nothing, but his brother and sisters each inherited sums of money. Anastasio believed he had been unjustly cut out of the will, and his brother and sisters were disgruntled because their share was less than the house and *sitio* were worth. As Anastasio became more prosperous, his brother and sisters became more envious and vindictive. Later another quarrel arose over a small wooded plot of mountain land which their mother had left for the use of all her children. [428]

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578 One day Anastasio made a charcoal oven there to burn wood for charcoal. At once
593 his brother and sisters interpreted this to mean that he was appropriating the land, and they all went together to denounce him. Anastasio was very much angered and said that he merely intended to burn charcoal there. His brother then demanded payment because Anastasio had cut wood without having given notice to him as elder brother. The quarrel lasted a long time and made for much bitterness and a complete break in relations. The elder brother began to spread gossip about Anastasio's wife having relations with another man. The gossip reached Anastasio's ears while he was drunk, and he attacked his wife in a rage and would have choked her to death had he not been stopped by his children. This incident, which Anastasio now attributes to his brother, has all but ruined Anastasio's marriage.

Bad feeling remained between the two brothers and between Anastasio and his sisters for a long time, but bit by bit Anastasio's bitterness subsided. He described his attitudes in these words: "We are not like animals. We quarrel a little but later we get along like brothers and sisters. To keep up grudges?—that no." There is little visiting among these families now, and Anastasio no longer asks for or accepts advice from his siblings, but he still feels obligated to inform his elder brother of events of importance, such as sending his daughter to a distant school and permitting another daughter to seek work in Mexico City. Anastasio also still sends meat to his elder brother when he slaughters a pig, and both families exchange *mole* at fiesta time. Anastasio's wife is again beginning to borrow corn from her brother-in-law when she cannot get it elsewhere, and recently when Anastasio fell from a tree and broke his hand, his brother and sister-in-law came to visit him and brought him food. Anastasio is considered "good" by his relatives, because he forgives those who cause him trouble.

COUSINS, UNCLES, AUNTS, AND OTHER RELATIVES

605 The relations between cousins are often close and show some of the qualities of sibling relations. Generally an individual will have one or two favorite cousins, usually a first cousin or *primo hermano*, with whom there may be regular visiting and the giving of mutual aid. But in time of emergency, aid can be counted on even from more distant cousins. There is one important difference between cousin and sibling relations, namely, the strong taboo against sexual relations between siblings is considerably weaker in the case of cousins. It is quite common for children who are cousins to play together, particularly when the cousins live on adjoining or nearby house sites, and in some cases a boy's first sexual experience will be with an older cousin. The Spanish refrain, "A la prima se la arrima," has some application to life in Tepoztlán.

604 The relations between uncles and nephews is more of a respect-relationship but it may also become quite intimate. An uncle is often a child's favorite and will frequently bring some gift for a nephew or niece. The fact that the uncle relationship has more of the respect quality makes it a more solid relationship than the sibling relationship. Work exchanges between uncles and nephews occur more often than between married siblings. But quarrels with uncles also occur, particularly over matters of inheritance. We have a number of cases where, upon a man's

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death, his brother will step in and claim a portion of the inheritance from the widow, especially when her children are still small.

IN-LAWS

Because of the predominance of patrilocal residence, the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship is the most important of all in-law relations. When the young bride goes to live with her husband's family, she is expected to take the role of a grown daughter, addressing her husband's parents as mother and father and giving them the same respect and obedience she owes her own mother and father. Her work is assigned by the mother-in-law and generally consists of the most burdensome tasks, such as grinding corn, making tortillas, and washing and ironing the clothing of the entire family. In the past, when girls married at twelve or thirteen and were unskilled, it was the duty of the mother-in-law to teach them the work.

It is the obligation of the mother-in-law to chaperone her daughter-in-law and to see that she remains a faithful wife. To this end the daughter-in-law is expected to remain within the house most of the time and not to go out alone. There are many jokes told which depict the mother-in-law as the "policeman." When the daughter-in-law gives birth to a child, the mother-in-law has the major responsibility of caring for both of them; the quality of this care often depends upon whether or not the mother-in-law approves of her daughter-in-law. In cases in which the mother-in-law disapproves of the marriage, because the couple eloped or because the girl was pregnant before the marriage, or because she had a bad reputation, the young wives may be grossly neglected during and after childbirth.

Although many mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law manage to get along fairly well, the relationship is obviously a "charged" one and is generally recognized as such by Tepoztecos. Both women tend to approach their new relationship with apprehension. The young wife fears that she may not be able to please her mother-in-law, that too much work will be demanded of her, that she will feel like an outsider in a strange house. Many girls have grown up with the idea, learned from their mothers and other married women, that the daughter-in-law is merely the "slave" of the mother-in-law and suffers much at her hands. The mother-in-law, on the other hand, fears that her new daughter-in-law will be lazy and just another mouth to feed. If the girl comes from a better-to-do family, she may look down upon the way of life in her husband's home and cause uneasiness. It is for this reason that when marriages are arranged, the boy's parents seek a poor girl who will not be demanding or afraid to work.

In many cases the fears are justified and much quarreling occurs. The mother-in-law expects the younger woman to work as hard, if not harder, than she herself works. In fact, many women shift almost the entire burden of the household upon the daughter-in-law, so that they may take up business activity outside the home. The daughter-in-law, who may be seventeen or eighteen years of age, has been working hard from the age of thirteen in her own home under the instruction of

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Old Age and Death 413



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Fig. 64. Tepoztecs worry about facing a dependent old age.

The situation of the aged varies considerably from family to family. The ownership of property, particularly of the kind which can be rented out and which produces an income with little or no work, is the best assurance for a secure old age. It is for this reason that parents generally do not divide their property among the children until after death. Delayed inheritance also gives them continued control over their children; if a married son lives with his parents well into their old age they are indeed fortunate, for he works the land, and the daughter-in-law does most of the work of the household. But most old people own only their house and *sitio*, with perhaps a few fruit trees and a pig, and can be self-supporting only by hiring themselves out to others, or by carrying on a business.

A large proportion of old women, especially widows, support themselves by washing and ironing clothes, by selling tortillas, by raising a few pigs and chickens for sale, by buying small amounts of fruit and garden produce to sell in other villages, or as midwives and *curanderas*. There are fewer non-strenuous, gainful activities for old men, particularly for those who have learned no skill other than farming. Those who have no children or relatives to whom they can turn for regular or occasional aid are in a difficult position. Occasionally an aged person finds it necessary to support not only himself but an orphaned grandchild or a disabled, unmarried son or daughter. But the majority of Tepoztecan old people are at least partially aided by a son or daughter, a nephew, or grandchild. Cases of neglect, indifference, and even cruelty occur, but are few.

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